

Title: ARMENIAN DEMANDS ON TURKISH TERRITORY (Armenian SSR, USSR;
Turkey)

Source: Armeniya i Turtsiya (Armenia and Turkey), All-Union Lecture
Bureau, Committee for Higher School Affairs, Pravda Publishing
House, Moscow, 1946, Russian pamphlet.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1-HUM

ARMENIAN TURKISH RELATIONS AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

A. K. Dahivelagov

With the end of the first World War, after Germany and Turkey signed the surrender conditions, the victorious powers again turned their attention to the Armenian question. Participants of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, including Wilson and others, expressed doubt as to Turkish sovereignty over the Armenian regions, and Lloyd George demanded recognition for Turkish Armenia's "peculiar national conditions" of existence.

Those responsible for the postwar peace treaty did not at all doubt the justice of the demands of the Armenians for their native soil. This was reflected in the Sevres Treaty of 1920, which was signed by the victorious powers and Turkey. In accordance with Paragraph 88 of the treaty, Turkey along with the allied powers recognised Armenia as a free and independent state. According to Paragraph 89, the determination of the boundary line between Turkey and Armenia was to be submitted to the president of the United States for arbitration. Armenia was assured an outlet to the Black Sea and Turkey was required to demilitarize its frontier with Armenia. On 22 November 1920, Wilson, as arbitrator, proposed that the border of Armenia run through the vilayets of Van, Bitlis, Erzurum and Trabzon.

However, the decisions of the Sevres treaty were as flimsy as Sevres china. They were not put into effect primarily because the Entente powers were not so much concerned with the Armenian nation as they were with furthering their own imperialistic interests. The Sevres treaty was concluded not only without Soviet Russia's participation but even opposed to her interests.

In the meantime, while negotiations between the victorious powers went on, Kemal collected a large military force and not only refused to clear the territory which was under negotiation in the Sevres treaty, but crossed the borders of Russian Armenia. Russian Armenia was at

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

that time under the rule of Armenian nationalist counterrevolutionary dashnaks. Relying on the powers of the Entente, the dashnak government was engaged in a struggle with Soviet Russia and was not concerned with the national interests of Armenia. Turkey took advantage of this. Turkish forces under the command of one of the most reactionary Turkish generals, Kasim Karabekir, invaded Armenia virtually without opposition, and occupied Kars, Surmalu, and Alexandropol (now Leninakan). The Entente which had instigated the Dashnaks against the Turks did nothing to help Armenia. Kasim Karabekir forced the Dashnak government to sign a very severe peace treaty.

According to the terms of this peace treaty, signed in Alexandropol on 2 December 1920, Armenia actually became a protectorate of Turkey and was deprived of the right to maintain an army. The Dashnak government surrendered the territory of Kars and Ardahan, Surmalu Uyesd and Erivan Gubernia, only retaining the territory of Erivan and Echmiadzin uyesds with a population of 400,000. At the same time, the Menshevik government of Georgia gave up the Batumi region to Turkey.

Soviet Armenia

In the days when mortal danger threatened the Armenian people, Soviet Russia came to their rescue. At a joint session of the Caucasian Bureau and the Communist Party of Azerbaydshan with I. V. Stalin as chairman, Stalin stated that "Armenia must be saved at any price.

In Armenia, powerful national uprisings against the counterrevolutionary dashnaks broke out. The workers of Armenia led by the Armenian Bolsheviks overthrew the dashnak government with the help of the Red Army and established Soviet rule.

On 29 November 1920, Armenia was sovietized. Stalin, welcoming the workers of Armenia, wrote: "Armenia, tormented, exhausted and led to destruction, starvation and poverty by her Entente 'friends' has now turned to liberty and the Soviet power. Only Soviet rule can bring peace and national restoration to Armenia."

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Since the one-sided treaty of Alexandropol was not recognized by the Soviet government, the negotiations between the USSR and Turkey which were carried on in Moscow again brought up the subject of Turkish and Armenian relations. The determination of the borders was a very difficult affair. It was necessary to face the fact that a large part of Armenia was already in Turkish hands, although not as large an area as envisaged by the Alexandropol treaty. Also to be considered was the complicated international situation which existed in 1920-1921 and which required that the Soviet government maintain peace with Turkey and not involve itself in a war with Turkey as the powers of the Entente desired. On the basis of these considerations, a Soviet - Turkish treaty was signed on 16 March 1921 in Moscow. Under it, the Turkish Kars and Ardahan regions as well as Surmalu Uyesd and Erivan Guberniya were given up by Armenia.

On 13 October 1921, a similar treaty was concluded in Kars between the three Caucasian republics with the participation of the RSFSR. Both treaties sought to establish a friendly policy on the side of Turkey towards the USSR. During 25 years of Soviet rule Armenia was transformed from a poverty stricken hinterland to a country of developing agriculture, and culture. The Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR was established; more than ten higher educational institutions were opened; and a whole series of schools, theatres and other cultural and educational institutions were founded. As a part of the powerful Soviet government, Armenia carries its share of the work of industry, agriculture, culture and science of the Soviet Union.

More than a million foreign Armenian refugees from all over the world look to Soviet Armenia. Recently hundreds of thousands of Armenians from various countries came there. The fatherland welcomed its sons, and a recent decree of the Soviet government officially authorized the immigration of foreign Armenians. However, the intolerable territorial construction of the republic limits immigration, while at the same time

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

the fertile areas of Kars, Ardahan and Surmalu which were annexed by Turkey are very sparsely populated. The instinctive attraction to the fatherland which is observed among Armenians living abroad again raises the question of reuniting the Armenian territory which used to be Russian with Soviet Armenia. The Armenian people passionately desire the restoration of their territory under the Soviet banner. Such action would only meet the minimum requirements of the Armenian people. The number of Armenians who live abroad is about the same as those living at the present time in Soviet Armenia. Even with the return to the borders of 1914, Armenia will not be able to receive all Armenians who wish to settle on their native soil. Therefore the thoughts of Armenians constantly turn toward the restoration of their territorial integrity. They desire to have included in Soviet Armenia, in addition to the territory which was seized from her in 1920, the regions of Van, Bitlis and Erzurum.

In the name of the General Assembly of the United Nations, of the government of the USSR and the government of Armenian SSR, of the recently elected Catholicos, George VI, of Armenian colonies in all corners of the world, the hope is expressed that, ultimately all native Armenian land and all Armenian people, scattered all over the world, will be united under the banner of the Armenian Soviet Republic. The justice of these demands cannot be questioned. The Armenian people have the right and the possibility of utilizing the wealth of their native soil for the well being of a regenerate national state.

- E N D -

CONFIDENTIAL

- 4 -